

Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2017

Report on Consultation

1. Consultation Overview

Extensive consultation with a wide range of groups and individuals was undertaken during various stages of development of the plan:

- A **Steering Committee** was formed at the commencement of the project (May 2014) to guide the process and provide advice on key management issues and the development of objectives, policies and actions
- **Auditor-General's Investigation** into the Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment (LCC) - July 2014 to May 2015 – members of the Steering Committee provided advice on the response to the Auditor-General.
Preparation of a Risk Management Plan by a cross-agency working group was recommended by Auditor General.
- **Risk Management Plan** prepared by cross agency working group, the LCC Implementation Coordination Group (LCCICG) - Oct 2015 to Jan 2016, finalised June 2016. Members of the LCCICG included the Steering Committee and additional representatives from EPA, Health Directorate and the Rural Fire Service.
- **Preliminary draft reserve management plan** – Steering Committee was consulted in March 2016, LCCICG in April 2016, and key stakeholder groups consulted in May and June 2016, including Bushfire Council.
- **Draft reserve management plan** circulated to key stakeholders from Aug to Nov 2016 prior to public release. Consultation included Directors-General Water Group in Aug 2016 and all Government Directorates in Sept – Oct 2016.
Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal groups participated in a field trip to the LCC and provided their input into the plan.
- **Public release of the draft plan** - 16 January 2017 to 10 March 2017
- **Final plan** - follow up consultation with key groups, individuals and agencies.

1.1 Steering Committee

Membership of the Steering Committee was comprised of representatives from:

- Parks and Conservation Service land managers and Fire and Forestry Unit
- EPSDD – Water Policy Unit
- Conservator liaison officer
- Aboriginal Liaison officer ACT Heritage Unit
- Icon Water
- ESA

Issues papers on key management issues (water, fire, recreation, natural values, pine plantations and management zoning) were prepared for review by the Committee over several meetings (Meeting 1 May 2014, Meeting 2 June 2014, February 2015) and formed the basis of the chapters of the draft plan. A specific water working group was formed to oversee preparation of the Water Resources chapter of the plan. The group included most of the Steering Committee and additional representatives from Icon Water, the Catchment Management and Water Policy Branch of EPD, Environment Protection Authority and the Health Protection Service. The Preliminary Draft Plan was reviewed by Steering Committee in March 2016.

1.2 Auditor-General's Investigation into Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment - July 2014 to May 2015

An internal working group was formed to advise on the Environment Directorate's response to the Auditor-General's report and recommendations. Several members of the Steering Committee and additional representatives from Heritage, Environment Protection and Water Policy were included in the group.

The Auditor General made a number of recommendations pertinent to the reserve management plan, including that a Lower Cotter Catchment Risk Plan should be prepared and the reserve management plan should be finalised by July 2017. The recommendations have been considered in the final plan.

1.3 Risk Management Plan – October 2015 to January 2016 (finalised June 2016)

A cross-agency working group, the Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Coordination Group (LCCICG) was formed to guide the preparation of the Risk Management Plan. The working group included most of the Steering Committee and additional representatives from EPD, EPA, Icon Water, Emergency Services Commissioner, Rural Fire Service and ACT Fire and Rescue. The risk management plan identified issues that required further treatment and were to be addressed in the reserve management plan. The LCCICG has an ongoing role in the coordination of management activities within the Lower Cotter Catchment and provides regular reports to the Directors General Water Group. The issues requiring further treatment are included in Appendix 6 of the reserve management plan.

1.4 Preliminary Draft Reserve Management Plan

Completion of the draft reserve management plan was delayed pending the outcomes of the Auditor General's investigation and preparation of the Risk Management Plan. The preliminary draft plan was reviewed by the Steering Committee in March 2016 and the LCCICG in April 2016. The LCCICG has now effectively replaced the Steering Committee. The preliminary draft plan was circulated within relevant Government agencies in April 2016.

The preliminary draft plan was presented to the Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee (NRMAC) in April 2016. Key stakeholder groups, including the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Icon Water, Bushfire Council, Conservation Council,

Uriarra Residents Association, ACT Heritage Council, Recreation Groups, Greening Australia, Dr Ian Falconer, ACT National Parks Association, Southern ACT Catchment Group, Waterwatch, Institute of Applied Ecology, University of Canberra, and UNEC were also consulted in May and June 2016. All comments received were considered in preparing the draft plan.

1.5 Draft Reserve Management Plan

The draft reserve management plan was finalised in July/August 2016 and was circulated to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, ACT Planning Authority Chief Planning Executive, Director's General Water Group and all ACT Government Directorates in September/October 2016. A meeting was held with Treasury officials to clarify some of the actions in the plan. Only two comments were received from the Directorates and were considered in finalising the draft plan. There was general support for the plan.

1.6 Public Release of the draft plan

The draft plan was released for public comment on 16 January 2017 and submissions closed on 10 March 2017. Letters and emails requesting comment were sent to all identified stakeholders including the National Capital Authority, the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, the Auditor General and all relevant recreation groups.

Presentations were arranged as requested by a number of groups including the University of Canberra on 22 February, Greening Australia on 1 March and the Environment Planning Forum on 2 March. A public workshop was held on 8 February and 16 members of the public attended. A field trip to the LCC for Traditional Custodians was held on 29 May.

Residents of Uriarra Village expressed concern that the plan may restrict their access to an area of leased land south of the village within the public land boundary of the LCC. The plan now includes a map of the area and clearly states that the provisions of the plan do not apply to that area and that a Land Management Agreement applies to the land.

Further consultation was undertaken with the ACT Equestrian Association (ACTEA) regarding access to trails west of Brindabella Road. The ACT Parks and Conservation Service has now made additional access available to trails in the Sherwood Forest area north of the LCC. In addition, access to trails west of Brindabella Road has been made available for events requiring a permit. ACTEA has expressed their satisfaction with these new arrangements.

The ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment suggested a change to the structure of the plan and inclusion of infographics to enhance understanding of the plan.

Twenty four written submissions were received on the draft plan and a summary of the issues raised and how the plan has responded to those issues follows.

2. Summary of Public Consultation

Not all of the public comments received have been included in this summary as many of the issues raised were common to a number of submissions and some comments were not specific to the LCC. Where comments endorsed or agreed with the draft plan, they have not been included as they required no changes to the plan. Where minor editorial comments were received, appropriate changes have been made to the plan and the detailed comments have not been included in this summary.

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
GENERAL COMMENTS	
<p>The plan contains generic content. Standard content and policies for management plans should be collated into a central document which can then be referred to in specific management plans.</p>	<p>Plan is designed to stand alone so includes strong background information related to reserve management as well as specific actions to the LCC.</p>
<p>Three main points for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applying a more comprehensive framework, as set out in the standards*, clearly identifying reference ecosystem(s) and its attributes, linking these through to the measurable and time linked objectives; 2. Linking objectives explicitly through to the relevant operational management plans and action plans; and 3. Strengthening the commitment and governance regarding research, monitoring and knowledge management. <p>*The Standards referred to are the; <i>National Water Quality Management Strategy (2000)</i> and the <i>National Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration in Australia (2016)</i>.</p>	<p>These recommendations are generally beyond the scope of a management plan and would be more appropriately addressed in detailed operational and implementation plans (Point 2). Where appropriate, changes have been made to the plan, including a new section on Landscape Recovery to address Point 1. and actions requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of monitoring the effectiveness of the restoration/regeneration effort • Assessment of the effectiveness of restoration efforts to date to inform the development of a new, 10 year vegetation restoration management plan • Implementation of a long term program or restoration incorporating community involvement, plantings and direct seeding. <p>Point 3 is a general consideration for PCS across the reserve system and is not specific to the LCC. Further consultation has been undertaken on the issues raised in the submission.</p>
Resourcing	
<p>It seems unlikely that the stringent restrictions on use of and access to the catchment proposed in the plan will be effective unless more resources are allocated to this important work. The Plan does not specifically address the matter of resourcing for its implementation,</p>	<p>Beyond the scope of the plan. Resources are subject to the budget cycle.</p>

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
but it is difficult to see how the plan can be implemented in any meaningful way without additional resources being allocated to it.	
Since the fire, PCS has co-ordinated the considerable resources provided by the ACT Government and the community through many NGOs and concerned citizens and has made significant progress towards the rehabilitation of the LCC. The decision by the ACT Government in 2008 not to re-establish the rest of the pine plantation area has substantially increased the area that needs to be rehabilitated to native vegetation and will lead to a significant increase in the resources needed to achieve that rehabilitation. Resources for rehabilitation will be needed beyond the period of the Draft Management Plan.	Since the fire, rehabilitation of the catchment to native species has been better than expected. Resourcing of the rehabilitation is beyond the scope of the plan and subject to the budget cycle. It is acknowledged that resources will be beyond the time-frame of a 10 year plan.
There is no discussion of resourcing the strategy, nor the increased resource needs implied in the plan. A management plan should have a chapter or section on resourcing scenarios and how they influence implementation.	Not agreed. Resourcing is beyond the scope of a management plan and subject to the budget cycle.
Auditor General's recommendations	
There are a total of 12 recommendations in the Auditor General's report 'Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment report no.3/2015' which were adopted by the ACT Legislative Assembly and must be incorporated into any revised management plan.	The Auditor General's recommendations, where relevant, have been addressed within the plan. See below.
Recommendation 1 – Develop a Code of Catchment Management	A new Code of Sustainable Land Management Practice is under development and the plan refers to it (Ch. 7 Fire Management and, Ch 11 Environmental Protection and Management Operations)
Recommendation 2 - Review of Management Agreement between Conservator and Icon Water	Completed in Feb 2017 and includes LCC. Outlines approvals process for maintenance works carried out by Icon. The Agreement is referred to in s. 3.4 of the plan.
Recommendation 3 – Implement the TAMS and Icon Water Code of Practice	To be incorporated into the new Code of Sustainable Land Management Practice (see response to Rec 1.)

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
Recommendation 4 – Review and finalise the Parks and Conservation Service Code of Sustainable Land Management.	To be incorporated into the new Code of Sustainable Land Management Practice (see response to Rec 1.)
Recommendation 5 – Review the management and coordination arrangements to the Lower Cotter Catchment	Completed May 2015. Directors General Water Group formed and an inter-Directorate Working Group formed. Plan outlines new management arrangements (Chapter 3 Management Framework)
Recommendation 6 – Give effect to the Water Resources Act: ACT Water Policy coordination	Completed – Not relevant to the plan.
Recommendation 7 - Development of a Lower Cotter Catchment Risk Plan	Completed. (See Appendix 6.)
Recommendation 8 – Finalise the Plan of Management for the Lower Cotter Catchment.	Final plan referred to Minister and subsequently the Standing Committee
Recommendation 9 – Regrowth pine forest in and adjacent to the Lower Cotter Catchment.	Blue Range Rehabilitation Plan developed and being implemented (see Ch 7)
Recommendation 10 – Review of the Lower Cotter Catchment road and fire trail network	Review completed (see Ch 4)
Recommendation 11 – Remediation of sediment control structures in the Lower Cotter Catchment.	Review completed and remediation implemented. New action in plan to develop and implement a long term erosion control plan (see Ch 5).
Recommendation 12 – Report on restoration against the Strategic Management Plan	Responsibility of the Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment.
MANAGEMENT PLAN AIM	
Aim needs to incorporate an acknowledgement of First People	Comment noted. The aim of the plan relates to the statutory management objectives. Acknowledgement is on the inside cover of the plan.
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
The intended audience should be clearly identified in the plan.	The intended audience is stated in the Aim and has now been repeated in the Introduction.
Forestry history There is only passing reference to the history during forestry operations between 1926 and 2003.	A brief land use history has been added to the Introduction and a graphic illustrating the land use timeline has been added. The full history of former commercial plantations is too detailed for this management plan and would more appropriately be located on the Environment website.
Implementation	This level of detail is not included in statutory management plans which have a minimum ten year life. The detail will be included in

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The draft plan does not detail the specific program of works, the framework for future operational plans and no budget guidance for implementation of the plan.	implementation plans, other strategies, operational plans and annual works plans. Funding for future works is subject to normal budget cycles.
Implementation Evaluation methodologies need to be included for actions to measure the success of implementation.	The management plan requires the land manager to develop a separate implementation plan which is to include evaluation methods and key indicators to measure the progress and success of implementation.
CHAPTER 2 SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES	
Section 2.1 refers to a new approach to managing the LCC but does not appear to clearly describe this.	A new diagram has been added to the plan which provides a graphic representation of the key issues and challenges in the LCC.
CHAPTER 3 MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK	
Integrated management: The plan needs to indicate responsibilities for implementation and will need an Executive Manager to implement the plan.	Implementation responsibilities are indicated in the actions table at Appendix 1. More detailed responsibilities will be included in an implantation plan. Appointment of an Executive Manager is beyond the scope of the plan.
CHAPTER 4 ZONING AND ACCESS	
Zoning	
Some of the roads in Zone 2: Road Corridors Zone, are known to be of dubious quality through highly erodible areas which have been difficult to maintain in the past. Some are obvious ring roads while others are dead ends and do not lead to any particular attraction. These need to be reviewed on the basis of their suitability and potential visitor attraction.	A road network review has recently been completed by PCS staff. The road network will be kept under review over the life of the plan. The criteria for the road review included hazard reduction, fire suppression and emergency response, land management operational needs and recreational access. The zoning map has been updated to take into consideration the completed road review. Further information on access has been included in section 4.2 of the management plan.
The rest of the LCC had been lumped together as Zone 1: Core Catchment Zone despite variability across the landscape. The LCC contains many sub-catchments with different characteristics such as soil erodibility, fire intensity, previous pine age, native forest areas and relative success of rehabilitation. The plan should address actions to be taken in each of the sub-catchments.	Zoning in the LCC plan is primarily based on recreation access. The LCC is already managed to some extent on a sub-catchment basis e.g. Blue Range. Actions in the plan are provided for different conditions rather than spatially e.g. for soil erosion, weed control, restoration etc. The plan now identifies new actions for the development and implementation of a long

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
	term erosion control plan and a long term restoration program. The restoration program will include further detail at a sub-catchment level.
The width of the Road Corridor needs to be defined.	Now defined in Table 4.1 as “The width of the road corridors is generally defined as the width of the road formation plus the maintained verges on each side”.
Access	
4-wheel driving and single track trail biking are very destructive of the vegetation cover, and must be prevented.	Four-wheel driving and trail bike riding are only permitted on publicly accessible roads and prohibited elsewhere (Chapter 4 Zoning and Access).
When motorised access is restricted, impacts immediately decline. Motor vehicle access to the LCC should be limited. There are too many remote, unsealed roads available to motorised vehicles. All internal roads and fire trails west of Laurel Camp Road and south of Brindabella Road should be closed.	A road network review has recently been completed by PCS staff. The road network will be kept under review over the life of the plan. The criteria for the road review included hazard reduction, fire suppression and emergency response, land management operational needs and recreational access. The zoning map has been updated to take into consideration the completed road review.
The severe restrictions to be imposed on most of the network of secondary roads (and so-called ‘fire trails’) to vehicle access by the public demonstrate a lack of adequate verified science and peer reviewed articles in scientific journals to justify the closures.	The best available information has been used in decision-making on road closures. Many of the fire trails are former forestry roads and are no longer required. There is sufficient evidence available, including a recent road network review, that roads and trails are a significant contributor to soil erosion and sediment and that closure is justified for a number of reasons, including management requirements and a risk management approach to recreational access to the LCC.
Action No. 3 “Manage the construction of roads”. When so many roads are being closed, why should new roads be constructed?	The recent road review identified that minor rationalisation of the current network is required to enable closure of roads that are inappropriately located e.g. steep or highly erodible areas. New roads will only be constructed if they provide improved management service and reduce impacts on catchment values.
Table 4.2 Public Facilities will require toilets if you wish to reduce the potential contamination by <i>Giardia lamblia</i> etc.	The level of use of the LCC is sufficiently low to not warrant the provision of toilets. There are limited recreational activities permitted within close proximity to the water body.
CHAPTER 5 WATER RESOURCES	
Section 5.4: Water Quality	

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More attention is needed to the extreme erodibility of soils, erosion minimisation, distribution of stormwater to avoid large flows	Development and implementation of a long term erosion control plan is now a requirement of the plan and has been given a high priority.
Remediation of sediment control structures is needed	Erosion control structures have been remediated recently.
In the granitic soils area of the catchment the extent of gully erosion is horrific. The least disturbance of the stabilising plant cover results in sheet and gully erosion, with disastrous results. This requires extreme care in road works, construction to distribute stormwater to avoid large flows and prevention of damage from vehicular traffic. Several actions in the plan relate to erosion control. These should be consolidated into a clear requirement with appropriate priority.	There has been a recent review of erosion control structures in the LCC and remediation of the structures has been implemented. Actions in the plan have been reviewed and consolidated where appropriate. A new action for the development and implementation of a long term erosion control plan is now a requirement of the plan and has been given a high priority. Road works will be subject to new Code of Sustainable Land Management (under development)
There are some small, isolated areas of active erosion seemingly related to roads and trails and their contribution to total catchment sediment load is likely to be minimal. These can be managed on a case by case basis and are not a sufficient reason to restrict broad access to unaffected areas.	The extensive road and trail network was related to former commercial forestry in the LCC. The primary purpose of the area is now protection of water quality and the road network has been reviewed to rationalise roads and trails. Those not required for current management purposes have been closed. Unrestricted access to the catchment has been identified as a significant risk requiring treatment. Road closures will remain in place. No changes to the current policy of restricted access are proposed.
Monitoring is vital to provide information on changes over time and will inform management of the success or otherwise of the various programs and works in the Lower Cotter Catchment. The key indicators of success are whether water quality is improving, and whether catchment soils and vegetation are stabilising. An active high priority program of scientific monitoring needs to be elaborated under the water resources heading.	Monitoring of water quality is ongoing in the LCC. Two new actions have been identified for; development of a long term erosion control plan for the LCC; and implementation of a long term program of restoration. Monitoring will be a requirement of these programs.
CHAPTER 6 LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGICAL VALUES	
Section 6.5 Native Vegetation: Native vegetation is primarily forest and woodland, with little attention paid to other structural communities such as open grasslands, meadows, fens as landscape	Additional information on other communities, such as the bogs and fens at Blundells Flat and Shannons Flat and their habitat values and ecological role, has now been included.

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
and habitat elements and as important contributors to landscape functionality and resilience.	
Section 6.5 Native Vegetation: An objective is needed for the desired trajectory of landscape and ecology.	A new section has been added (Section 6.8 Landscape recovery) and includes the requirement for a new vegetation restoration plan to be prepared. This will outline in more detail, the long term desired trajectory for restoration.
Section 6.6.1 Fish: Make clear reference to how the recovery actions in the <i>ACT Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy</i> will be applied in the LCC.	Reference now included. The Strategy is currently under review and including recovery actions in the management plan is not agreed.
Section 6.6.1 Fish: Disappointed in the quality of research references regarding trout. There may be an anti-trout bias. Action 29 includes research into the impacts of introduced trout on threatened species. Trout are being demonised. Concerned that trout are brought up in the context of “pest animals”.	Text altered and additional references added. Action changed to say “research into the threats to threatened aquatic species...” Trout are not longer singled out. Trout are included in the ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy 2012 – 2022 and education of anglers is listed as a treatment option.
Section 6.6.2 Invertebrates: The draft plan content on rare or unusual invertebrates is limited.	Section reviewed and updated following further advice from aquatic ecologists.
Section 6.6.4 Birds: The woodland bird species mentioned also exist in dry forest. Management actions to improve wildlife connectivity can benefit species which occur both in woodland and forested habitats.	Comment noted and clarification of ‘woodland’ provided.
Section 6.7.3 Disease - Action 34: “Develop and implement protocols for preventing the spread of EHN and other aquatic disease”. Anglers would like to be involved in the development of the protocols.	Action 34 is now Action 29 which reads “Implement existing protocols for preventing the spread of EHN and other aquatic diseases and review their effectiveness as required”. The draft plan was in error saying ‘develop...’. The protocols exist and relate to land management and not to fishing.
Ecological restoration: The RMP should include better spatial information representing land use and ecosystem attributes.	A new section (6.8) has been added to the plan for Landscape Recovery including an action for the development and implementation of a long-term program of restoration. A new map of current vegetation structure has been added.
Landscape and ecological values – Primary management objectives. Suggest you include how this will be achieved.	A new section (6.8) has been added to the plan for Landscape Recovery including an action for the development and implementation of a long-term program of restoration. There is an ongoing 3-yearly monitoring program for landscape recovery.

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
The plan does not provide any meaningful information about lessons learnt in the management of the LCC in prior years and how they have been applied in the plan.	See above.
Pest animal control Questions the effectiveness of control methods for hares, goats and feral cats.	Control methods for Pest Animals are generally in accordance with the <i>ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy</i> and will be adjusted in response to the impact particular animals are having on the values of the LCC.
CHAPTER 7 FIRE MANAGEMENT (Previously Chapter 9 in the draft plan)	
There is potential for disaster from wildfire damage and it needs a defined treatment plan.	Fire management in the LCC is in accordance with the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan 2014 – 2019, the Cotter Regional Fire Management Plan and annual Bushfire Operational Plans. These plans are based on a risk management approach. A Blue Range Rehabilitation Plan 2014 – 2025 is being implemented.
Cooperative arrangements with NSW, Namadgi and ESA essential.	Comment noted. Cooperative arrangements exist.
The plan needs to address the potential application of cultural burning in the valley bottom flats to keep the landscape open.	The plan makes provision for the local Aboriginal community to be involved in implementing and monitoring cultural-ecological burns in fire management operations where possible. Chapter 7, Action 49.
Concern that burning for fire fuel control will be implemented below fire thresholds for particular communities and that burning may be excessive. This is too much fire management in a recovering landscape.	Annual Bushfire Management Plans are reviewed by vegetation ecologists. The policy for Fire Management states that “Fire management will aim to maximise compatibility between fire fuel management priorities and preferred water catchment and ecological outcomes”. The Ecological Guidelines for Fuel and Fire Management Operations are to be followed in all fire operations (Action 46).
Blue Range. The Blue Range is a potential conduit for fire into the LCC and this point and the potential for significant degradation arising from such as event is not highlighted in this section.	Text has been reviewed and reference is now made to the site specific Blue Range Rehabilitation Plan (Section 7.9)
CHAPTER 8 CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES (Previously Chapter 7 in the draft plan)	
Ongoing management of the reserve would be considerably enriched and authoritative with input from the ACT’s Aboriginal groups.	Traditional Custodians and local Aboriginal people have been consulted and various sections of the plan have been reviewed following their input.
Action 7: Action could be strengthened to say collaboration with Aboriginal people will be used to inform relevant management practices.	Action 7 changed to Action 6 and now reads “Work with Traditional Custodians to achieve their objectives for cultural flows and incorporate into relevant management practices”.

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
<p>Section 7.3 Aboriginal heritage: The draft plan does not acknowledge the historical Aboriginal reference to practically the whole of the LCC as 'Goondawarra'. Subject to consultation with Traditional Custodians, it would be a fitting name for the LCC reserve.</p>	<p>Section 7.3 is now Section 8.4 and includes information on Aboriginal names for the area. A new action has been added: Action 51 "Consult with Traditional Custodians about dual-naming of the reserve or places within the reserve".</p>
<p>Section 7.5 Management considerations and issues: Aboriginal connections and heritage. These dot points look appropriate but have these Aboriginal connections and heritage been devised in consultation and agreement with the relevant Aboriginal groups and elders.</p>	<p>Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal groups have been consulted. (See above)</p>
<p>Section 7.6: There is no mention of parts of the Blundells Flat conifer arboretum which survived the fires, nor of the Blundells Flat poplar arboretum, nor the seed orchard at that site. The plan needs to include additional information for conservation management and presentation.</p>	<p>Section 8.7 now includes further information on the Arboreta. A new action has been included. Action 55 "Explore opportunities to conserve and interpret European cultural heritage. For example, the Conservation Management Plan for Blundells Flat and Shannons Flat contains a detailed history of the area and conservation policies and works that could be implemented for ongoing protection and management of cultural heritage features".</p>
<p>CHAPTER 9 RECREATION (previously Chapter 8 in the draft plan)</p>	
<p>The water catchment must be closed to motorised sports to reduce erosion, and the park rangers now have enforcement powers under the Nature Conservation Act. The enforcement of compliance is essential if the controls on recreation are to be effective. The future issue of infringement notices for repeated 'inappropriate activities' will strengthen compliance.</p>	<p>Motorised vehicles are only permitted on publicly accessible roads and trails. Section 11.7 Compliance and Enforcement: PCS prefers a public relations and education approach. Enforcement is an operational response to inappropriate activities and will be used where necessary, including referral to the AFP.</p>
<p>Concern about progressive exclusion of some groups leaving them nowhere to go.</p>	<p>Recreational activities permitted in the LCC are subject to a risk management approach and only low impact activities are considered appropriate in a water catchment.</p>
<p>The plan should consider the benefits of the hardening of water crossings in order to reduce water turbidity.</p>	<p>Most water crossings on publicly accessible roads in the LCC are already hardened and there are no plans to harden further crossings.</p>
<p>Section 8.2 – Fishing: Is there any suggestion of changes to stream based angling.</p>	<p>Section 8.2 is now Section 9.2. Angling is in accordance with the Fisheries Act. No changes are proposed in the management plan.</p>
<p>Section 8.2 – Fishing: Consideration of moving the prohibited waters boundary upstream to Vanitys Crossing under a future review of the</p>	<p>Section 8.2 is now Section 9.2 Comment noted.</p>

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
Fisheries Act is not unreasonable given the expansion of the Cotter Reservoir.	
Section 8.2– Fishing: Could consideration be given to allowing limited recreational fishing activities (such as lure and fly only) in Cotter Dam on a trial basis.	No recreational fishing or associated activities will be allowed in the Cotter Reservoir as the risks to water quality and possible impacts (such as EHN on threatened species) outweigh the recreational benefits.
Section 8.2 – Rock Climbing Small areas of the catchment area are used for climbing and signs, tracks are not required, just continued access.	A section on rock climbing and abseiling has been added to the plan. Rock climbing is permitted in the LCC except sites specifically excluded for their cultural heritage values.
Section 8.2 – Cycling There is no dedicated commentary on the use of motor bikes and the reference to trail bikes in the cycling section is confusing.	Trail bike riding is now considered separately in the plan.
Section 8.2 – Cycling The draft plan seems to think that ‘single track’ only refers to trails used by motor bikes. I agree that single track for use by motor bikes should not be allowed in the Cotter Catchment area. However, ‘single track’ can also refer to tracks designed for mountain bikes. I propose that single track mountain bike trails could be sustainably developed in the Cotter Catchment area and would not affect water quality.	There are no purpose designed single tracks or trails in the LCC for motor bikes. The only single tracks are those illegally formed by motor bikes and these are causing significant erosion problems in some environmentally sensitive areas. There are currently no proposals for development of single tracks for mountain bikes in the LCC. Should there be future proposals for such facilities, they will be considered under the provisions of Section 9.3 New recreational activities and facilities.
Section 8.2 Recreational activities Current measures to protect water supply are excessive. Picnic areas in secluded areas that existed pre-2003 fires could be re-opened with minimal risk to water quality.	Walking and picnicking are allowed everywhere within the LCC but no facilities are provided. There are currently no proposals to develop picnic areas/facilities in the LCC as other opportunities exist in nearby reserves outside the water catchment e.g. the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and the Cotter Reserve below the dam wall.
Section 8.2 Recreational Activities – Fishing The draft plan mentions the possibility of controlling Rainbow Trout and Brown trout populations in the future for the benefit of native species. Why is the section of the Cotter River in the LCC considered a trout stream under the ACT’s recreational fishing laws and closed to fishing from the June long weekend to October long weekend? The laws should be adjusted to allow anglers to target spawning trout	Threats to threatened fish species (including predation by trout) are considered in the ACT Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy, Action Plan 29, which is currently under review. The management plan includes an action (No 23) to undertake research in to the threats in accordance with Action Plan 29. The ACT Fishing Act is also under consideration for a future review. Until further research has been undertaken on the threats to threatened

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
throughout winter as an effective method of lowering predatory trout populations.	species by trout, it is unlikely that current restrictions under the Fishing Act will be changed.
<p>Section 8.2 Recreational activities – Rogaining Agree with the text of the draft plan section on <i>Orienteering, rogaining, mountain running</i> and that the Lower Cotter Catchment is a suitable location. Rogaining should be specifically allowed as an activity in Zone one.</p>	Rogaining is allowed in Zone 1 and Zone 2 of the LCC. A public unleased land permit is required for events.
<p>Section 8.2 Recreation The draft plan misses an opportunity to emphasise the value of Blundells Flat in planning recreation and does not encourage interpretation and education opportunities associated with low-key facilities and passive recreation.</p>	<p>There are currently no proposals to develop recreation facilities within the LCC. Should there be future proposals for such facilities, they will be considered under the provisions of Section 9.3 New recreational activities and facilities.</p> <p>The current focus for management in the LCC over the term of the plan is to protect water quality and restore the landscape.</p>
CHAPTER 10 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	
It is disappointing that in recognising the contributions of volunteers to restoration and protection of the catchment there is no mention of the region’s highly successful Waterwatch program.	Water watch has now been included in section 10.3 Community participation in management.
I recommend you develop more fully your education, community engagement and communications strategy. These all require separate and linked actions.	<p>Action 60 has been changed to say “Develop and implement education and communication strategies to improve community knowledge about the values of the LCC, appropriate use, and the importance of access restrictions in protecting water quality”.</p> <p>Action 62 has been changed to say “Develop and implement a strategy to encourage new and expanded volunteer participation in restoration activities, citizen science and research projects”.</p>
CHAPTER 11 ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS	
<p>Section 11.6 Commercial forestry: The draft plan seems to have moved forward the potential timetable for pine removal.</p>	The draft plan reiterates the 2007 Strategic Management Plan in that pines will be removed progressively over 30 years. It is desirable to remove the pines as soon as feasible as they are a significant source of weed seed which leads to dense areas of wildings that are costly to remove.
<p>Section 11.6 Commercial forestry: If harvesting of the remaining pines is delayed, it would pay for the cost of conversion to native</p>	The draft plan reiterates ACT Government policy that no further commercial pine plantations will be established in the LCC. Managing

Summary of key issues raised in public submissions	Response
forest and fund later stages of the overall program. Some areas of pine regeneration could be managed as 'temporary plantations'.	areas of pine wildings as 'temporary plantations' would be inconsistent with established policy direction and make the recovery of the LCC to native vegetation more difficult.
APPENDICES	
Unpublished references have been used.	In preparing the management plan, the best available information has been used.